

43rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CHAIR

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Jorgensen's Journal: Reason for Hope In Effort to Save SeniorCare

Someone once said, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

I feel a sense of hope right now, but we're certainly faced with some darkness, here in Wisconsin.

You see, earlier this month, Governor Scott Walker dropped a black hole of a budget – a budget that threatens public education at every level, our natural resources, and our long-term economic security.

It also threatens the well-being of Wisconsin senior citizens.

Governor Walker is trying – for a second time – to kill SeniorCare, a discount prescription drug program that helps provide low-cost, life-saving medications for those of us 65 and up. His budget would defund SeniorCare by 40% over the biennium and force everyone to enroll in Medicare Part D.

This plan doesn't work for Wisconsin.

Consider the consumer cost. Medicare Part D premiums run, on average, \$30 per month, while SeniorCare enrollment is just \$30 per year.

Medicare Part D hits taxpayers in the wallet, too. Subsidizing a Part D enrollee costs \$1,690 per year, nearly three times the tax dollars allocated to support someone in SeniorCare.

And, beyond the dollar signs, we know that Medicare Part D can be confusing. A smart consumer would have to research and choose between about 50 different plans, determining which offers the best deal on their specific medications. In contrast, SeniorCare has a simple, one-page application form; then, co-pays for all generics are \$5 and co-pays for brand-name drugs are \$15.

SeniorCare is special. In fact, Wisconsin is the only state in the nation that negotiates directly with drug companies to get the best prices.



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Frankly, drug companies are the only possible "winner" in Governor Scott Walker's plan to kill SeniorCare. If he's choosing those corporations over our aging parents and grandparents, we are in a very dark place, indeed.

But, as I say, I am hopeful.

Over the past few weeks, hundreds of people from all walks of life, income brackets, and political leanings have gotten involved in a petition drive I launched to Save SeniorCare. These folks are going door-to-door collecting signatures in support of SeniorCare. Others are using social media accounts to encourage friends to add their names to the online petition. There are pharmacists displaying the petitions in their stores, and aging advocates using their networks to spread the word.

They are the "light" in all of this.

Ours is a strategy that's worked before. In 2011, after we delivered 15,000 Save SeniorCare petitions to legislative leaders, they announced the plan would continue, unchanged. Already, I've heard from Republicans in high places that they don't agree with the Governor's proposal.

So, let's keep up the pressure. If you haven't already, please visit www.SaveSeniorCare.com to sign the online petition. Call my office, toll-free at (888) 534-0043, to have a hard copy sent to your home. In mid-March, we'll compile our results and share them.

Because of you, because of the work we're doing together, I have great hope that we will Save SeniorCare.

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